

# SWOSU Student Wins One of Two GEAR UP Scholarships in Oklahoma

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Reggy Yount, a Hobart freshman at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, is one of two recipients of national 2006 GEAR UP College Entrance Exam Scholarships.

Peterson's, a leading provider of education and career guidance, in collaboration with the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), presented Yount and Victor Martinez of Oklahoma City with scholarships of up to \$2,500 for demonstrating the greatest improvement in their performance on official college entrance exams.

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federally funded program administered by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Its purpose is to better prepare middle and high school students for college through academic preparation programs and scholarships for students, professional development activities for educators, and college access information for students and parents.

The ACT is scored on a 36-point scale. Yount increased his ACT score by 10 points from his freshman to senior year. Martinez improved his score by five points from his sophomore to senior year.

"We are extremely proud of these young men and all the other Oklahoma students who have committed themselves to 'doing what it takes' to prepare for college," said Interim Chancellor Phil Moss. "Their efforts are making a difference toward our ultimate goal of helping more students go to college."

Yount credits his most recent ACT score to improved reading skills, which are a result of difficult and challenging classes encouraged and supported by GEAR UP.

"GEAR UP is an excellent program that provides motivation and opportunities to students and allows them to thrive," Yount said. "Although it took enormous effort to complete the process, the reward was well worth all the hard work."

Yount and Martinez, two of six national recipients, were presented the scholarships at the NCCEP Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

Peterson's and NCCEP established the scholarship program to offer GEAR UP students financial assistance as they pursue their college studies. According to Mary Gatsch, president of Peterson's, the scholarship recognition program aims to support those deserving students and provide inspiration to others who are actively participating in GEAR UP programs all over the country.

"We are fortunate to have financial backing from Peterson's to help deserving students like Reggy and Victor pursue their dreams," State Regents' Chairman John Massey said. "The scholarship program is just another example of the business community and higher education working together for the betterment of our students and their futures."

Yount is majoring in education at SWOSU. With his degree, he hopes to become a history teacher and coach and eventually an administrator. Martinez is attending the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond and majoring in chemistry and pre-medicine. For more information on GEAR UP, visit [www.okhighered.org/gearup](http://www.okhighered.org/gearup) or call 800.858.1840.